

## **ABOUT US**

The Eastern Shore Public Library System (ESPL) serves the citizens of Accomack and Northampton counties through two branches in Accomack and Nassawadox and two affiliated libraries, the Island Library on Chincoteague and the Cape Charles Memorial Library in the Town of Cape Charles. Services and administrative support have been growing for Tangier residents and their Muddy Toes Public Library, but a formal agreement with their museum/library board does not exist at this time.

ESPL is a political subdivision by Northampton and Accomack County created under the provisions set forth in Section 42.1-37 of the Code of Virginia. It is tax exempt and donations are tax deductible. In 1957, ESPL started as a demonstration project of the Commonwealth of Virginia, located in the Town of Accomac's Community Hall. A Regional Library System was established on May 5, 1958 with a regional agreement by Accomack and Northampton Counties. The attached ESPL history has additional highlights of the system's evolution.



ESPL reports to and receives state aid annually from the Library of Virginia, meeting state library standards of excellence. With this status and the capacity of paid employees, ESPL has in the past served as fiscal agent for several community projects, particularly ones related to local history.

ESPL has seven full-time employees and eight part-time employees. The four locations have more than 113,067 volumes in print, a decrease of 3,113 from last year to manage the collection in preparation for the move to the new library. Patrons now have access to over 194,535 titles in eBooks and Audio-Visual formats, an addition of 16,458, to meet the increased demand and to reduce processing costs. Friends groups' donations have supported this increase. 10,330 print items were added to the system collections, 6,306 of that number at Accomac alone, all cataloged by ESPL technical services staff with preparatory help from volunteers. Accomac, location of the main circulating collection, had a 15% increase in new titles, due to some large donations and an effort to update the dated collection to make it more reflective of community needs.



As library patron needs shifted during the COVID pandemic, the ESPL pivoted to expand existing and remote services to increase access to reading and library materials for the Shore community. The creation of Student Virtual Use library cards and the expanded collections of eBooks, eAudiobooks, and eMagazines allowed individuals to read and learn while sheltering at

# EASTERN SHORE PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN, 2022 —2027

## SECTION 4: ABOUT US

home. Implementing automatic renewals and adding curated reading lists to ShoreCat, the library's catalog software, improved the overall patron experience.

ESPL also provides access to free informational databases which can be accessed in the library or remotely through the library website. The Library of Virginia provides Virginia public libraries FindItVA resources that include free online courses, career resources, and legal forms. New databases include JobNow, VetNow, and HelpNow.

Nearly 700 additional residents now have library cards, making a total of 16,425 individuals with library cards. New easy online registration makes it easier to get a card. ESPL plans assisted Tangier History Museum's Muddy Toes Public Library by providing books, assistance, children's activity packets, and promoting library e-resources. Books are mailed to patrons in Tangier.



During pandemic library closures, ESPL did not collect overdue fines. Due to the success of this improved accessibility change, historical trend in reduced fine income, and the long-term trend in e-reading, in September 2020, the circulation policy incorporating the fine free changes was implemented. While this reduces library income, the benefit to foster reading in the community outweighs this shortfall.

The Eastern Shore Public Library's four locations offer 30 public access computers. Wireless internet connections are available in all four locations, with outdoor access at Accomac and Nassawadox. Three AWE early literacy computer stations provided by a grant and Friends donations are available for children. iPad tables make six tablets available for children's use as well as 16 available for programs. Our public computers were used 3,333 times, a large decrease due to pandemic closures.

The Eastern Shore Public Library offers programs for adults and children throughout the year on a variety of topics; 57 virtual programs were held. Visits to the library's homepage totaled 73,936. A grant was received to create a new, separate Heritage Center website. Library catalog searches totaled 105,073. ESPL has 1,435 Facebook followers, plus other followers on the several other Facebook pages the libraries manage. Our e-newsletter has 3,540 subscribers.

